



Responses to questions:

**Q1. Page 12 - 1.8.1 ACCEPTANCE OF STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

The Department has noted it reserves the right not to enter a contract with a current vendor who is under a corrective action plan until all requirements are met.

- Is the current vendor under a corrective action plan?  
If so, please describe the deficiencies.

**R1. No.**

**Q2. Page 13 – 1.8.7 UNDERSTANDING OF SPECIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS**

The Department has requested an attestation that the individuals will remain with this project for the duration of activities for which they are proposed. We agree that vendors have the responsibility to propose individuals in good faith and not to reassign them to other projects, however vendors have no control over the personal decisions of employees. Additionally, the time between the proposal submission and the project start date is considerable, and employees can't remain on the "bench" awaiting assignments if another comes up before the contract award.

- Would the Department modify this language to require vendors to propose individuals in good faith with the expectation they will be permanently assigned to the project?

**R2. The purpose of this section is to insure that the vendor provides appropriate and sufficient manpower and resources to this project. The attestation is a proposal in good faith that individuals named therein will be permanently assigned to the project. The State recognizes that personal circumstances are subject to change and that ultimately vendors have no control over their employees' lives. Section 7.5.3 provides a means by which a vendor can change key personnel in their approved work plan if the need arises.**

**Q3. Page 19 - 3.0 OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT COLLECTIONS AND DISBURSEMENT PROCESSES**

Since 2000, EFT collections have increased to around 30%. It appears that EFT collection volumes have remained fairly steady since the end of 2006.

- Are there current efforts underway to increase EFT payment participation?

**R3. Yes.**

**Q4. Page 20 - 3.1.1 DHR PAYMENT PROCESSING**

The RFP states that "7 to 10% of [EFT] payments require additional research."

- Can the state please explain what type of research is needed for EFT payments?
- Is research required due to file format errors, or erroneous data in files, or missing data?
- Does the state find that the same 7 to 10% of EFT remitters are making these same errors repeatedly?

**R4. Failure by the remitter to enter a correct or complete case identifier is the most common cause for additional research. "Research" involves finding the correct case identifier on either the ALECS or the AOC database, completing an adjustment so that the payment will post, and communicating with the employer, caseworker, or court clerk so that the same error is not repeated. Our EFT volume is constantly increasing. Generally, the 7 to 10% of EFT payments requiring additional research come from new remitters or new court orders.**

**Q5. Page 22 - 3.3.1 OVERVIEW**

The RFP states "Information on new cases and changes in case data will be provided electronically on a daily basis from these two systems." Later, on page 33, the RFP states that three files will be



transmitted from ALECS and SJIS to the ASDU. One of these files is the ALECS Court Order and Payor Information File, and another is the SJIS Case Data File. These files are described as being transmitted weekly.

- Are these different than the file mentioned on page 22?
- If they are the same file(s), will this information be transmitted daily or weekly?

**R5. Page 22, 3.3.1.g. refers to the date being sent by the State to the ASDU. The ALECS file is sent to the ASDU database once per week. The SJIS file is sent to the ASDU database twice per week. (Note: This is a change in our process that occurred after the RFP was written. It will be amended to state that the SJIS file is sent twice per week.)**

Page 33, section 3.3.4.9, first lists 3 files that are sent from the ASDU to the State daily: ALECS payment file, SJIS payment file, and Journal file. Then it lists 2 files sent from the State to the ASDU weekly. These are the ALECS and SJIS files mentioned on Page 22. (As stated in the preceding paragraph, our RFP will have to be amended to state that the SJIS file is sent twice per week.) The third file is an Exceptions file and it is transmitted to the ASDU daily.

**Q6. Page 29 - 3.3.4.1 BILLING STATEMENTS**

Is the state open to suggestions for a redesign of the Alabama Child Support Billing Statement, for example to include a scannable OCR line?

**R6. Yes, the State is open to suggestions.**

**Q7. Page 29 - 3.3.4.1 BILLING STATEMENTS**

Does DHR send Billing Statements to employers?

**R7. No.**

**Q8. Page 29 - 3.3.4.2 SORT AND BATCH PAYMENTS**

Part B states "Contractor must keep the physical documents for one month before they can be properly disposed, at the Contractor's expense."

- Does this refer only to Correspondence documents, or to all documents received at the ASDU?
- If all documents, can the state please provide more detail?

**R8. This refers to all documents not forwarded to other entities. To include but not limited to: envelopes, stubs, source documents, or any media containing confidential data**

**Q9. Page 29-30 - 3.3.4.3 DEPOSIT PAYMENT INSTRUMENT**

Second paragraph (continues to page 30) states that checks must be encoded.

- Is Compass Bank setup to handle X9.37 deposits? (I.E. Image Exchange.)

**R9. Not currently. They expect to have that option sometime beginning mid-2009 or later.**

**Q10. Page 31 - 3.3.4.6 UNIDENTIFIED OR UNPOSTABLE PAYMENTS**

If a payment is identified after the initial transmission, will the contractor update the appropriate State system with the correction information, or will the information be 'retransmitted' in the daily file?

**R10. The State system is updated with the correction via a manual adjustment request submitted to DHR by the contractor.**



**Q11. Page 32 - 3.3.4.7 RECEIPT OF ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS**

Large Employer Data Files – Indicate how many Large Employers (100 + obligors) are currently sending files this way and how many different formats that are currently supported? Provide some examples of these formats (Fixed length, Comma Delimited etc).

Can you pl provide typical sizes for such files and typical file delivery method(s) used by these employers?

How many small employers (< 100 Obligors) currently send files and what are the typical file delivery methods used? Can you provide the file format used by small employers?

**R11. Currently the only electronic payments being receipted are EFT/EDI transactions in NACHA-approved format. This applies to both large and small employers.**

**Q12. Page 33 - 3.3.4.9 RECEIPT OF ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS**

a. ALECS Payment File – ASDU Receipt number field.

- Provide details if this Receipt number will be a combination of other data elements or the key information that needs to be included in this field.

**R12. The ASDU Receipt number is a unique number to identify an ASDU payment. The Vendor is required to provide the 8 digit Batch Date, 4 digit Batch Number, 3 digit Check Sequence, and 4 digit Stub Sequence not exceeding 19 characters.**

**Q13. Page 26 - 3.3.3.2 MAINTAINING THE ASDU DATABASE**

**Page 33 - Section 3.3.4.9 TRANSFER PAYMENT DATA**

Maintaining the ASDU Database – In this section it is indicated that data on new court orders and changes in court orders will be sent to ASDU on a daily basis. However, section 3.3.4.9 indicates that 'ALECS Court Order and Payer Information File' and 'SJIS Case Data file' will be sent on a weekly basis.

- Will the Contractor receive a Weekly full file and daily updates during the week?

**R13. See R5.**

**Q14. Page 33 – 3.3.4.9 TRANSFER PAYMENT DATA**

What is the expected time when payment files need to be delivered to the ALECS and SJIS systems on a daily basis?

Does the same schedule apply for Saturdays as well?

**R14. Payment files must be delivered to the State by 4:00 p.m. This also applies to Saturdays.**

**Q15. Page 33 - 3.3.4.9 TRANSFER PAYMENT DATA**

What different transmission protocols can be used for transmission of files to/from the State's systems? Please provide any file encryption requirements.

**R15. The available protocols are FTP via z/OS communication server, encrypted using PGP or not; SFTP; Connect:Direct. If the data is transferred within the state network ring, encryption is not required. Otherwise, one of the above methods is required.**

**Q16. Page 33 - 3.3.4.9 TRANSFER PAYMENT DATA**

Please provide any file encryption requirements for transmission of files to/from the State's systems.

**R16. See R15.**



**Q17. Page 36 - 3.3.7 CUSTOMER SERVICE UNIT**

What is the volume of letters, email and fax inquiries for the Customer Service Unit?

**R17. Letters received and forwarded by the SDU monthly are approximately 2500 pieces. Faxes number approximately 75 per month and emails are not tracked.**

**Q18. Page 36 - 3.3.7 CUSTOMER SERVICE UNIT**

How many FTEs are currently dedicated to the Level 1 Customer Service function?

- How many staff members work full time and how many work part time?
- Do they have any other duties? If so, please describe.

**R18. Four FTE's are dedicated to the Level 1 Customer Service function. Staff number 16 full-time and 2 part-time.**

**Yes, they have other duties such as working the unidentified payments report, posting payments with MPI's (miscellaneous posting instructions, preparing adjustment requests for processing and quality assurance.**

**Q19. Page 36 - 3.3.7.b CUSTOMER SERVICE UNIT**

The RFP states "Provide general problem resolution regarding lost, damaged, misposted or delayed receipts."

- Clarify that this includes speaking to obligors, but does not involve speaking to obligees. If an obligee calls, would the ASDU be required to a) transfer the caller or b) provide the caller with the correct telephone number?
- Clarify the meaning of "general problem resolution." What type of information and follow up is the vendor expected to provide?

**R19. 3.3.7.a. defines to whom the customer service will speak and the roles of the ASDU and local DHR offices with regard to obligees (payees). If an obligee calls, the ASDU would have to provide the caller with the correct telephone number of the county DHR office with case management responsibility as indicated in 3.3.7c.**

**"General problem resolution" as related to lost, damaged, misposted, or delayed receipts means taking whatever action necessary, e.g. contacting the payor to obtain a replacement for a damaged receipt, completing an adjustment request, contacting a caseworker or court clerk, etc., to cause the payment to become postable.**

**Q20. Page 36 - 3.3.7.f CUSTOMER SERVICE UNIT**

The RFP states that the Customer Service Unit is responsible for preparing Adjustment Requests to correct mispostings.

- Who ultimately corrects mispostings – the SDU vendor or Alabama program personnel?

**R20. Both prepare the Adjustment Request form. The actual online adjustment transaction is done by personnel in the Child Support Accounting Division of the Finance Department.**

**Q21. Page 36 - 3.3.7 CUSTOMER SERVICE UNIT**

The last paragraph under the heading "Customer Service Unit" specifies that "the majority of customer service inquiries cover via letters, email and fax rather than phone calls."

- Is the vendor responsible for opening mail, receiving and managing these types of inquiries? If so, how many in each category are received, and to what extent is the vendor involved? For example, must the vendor respond to the mail or merely forward it to the correct office? Must a log of incoming mail be maintained?
- Is the vendor responsible for responding to these inquiries? If so



- How many inquiries are received via each type of correspondence?
- Who pays the postage for outgoing mail – the vendor or the state?
- If the vendor pays for postage, what was postage expenditure for this function last year? Would the State consider allowing the vendor to pass through costs to the State?

**R21. The vendor is responsible for opening and routing mail received to the appropriate county office, ACDD ( Alabama Central Disbursement Division) for Non-IV D payments through the Administrative Office of Courts and other destinations.**

**A log of incoming correspondence is maintained by the SDU. Numbers of faxes monthly are approximately 75 and letters are approximately 2500. No stats available on number of emails.**

**The vendor does not manage requests through the mail but forwards correspondence on to the appropriate destination for response. Only very occasionally are inquiries from employers received regarding posting issues and these are responded to by the vendor.**

**Postage for outgoing mail is paid for by the vendor. Most correspondence outgoing correspondence is sent via the state hand mail system at no cost to the vendor. We have no figures on postage paid by the vendor last year. The State would not consider allowing the vendor to pass through postage costs to the State.**

**Q22. Page 36 - 3.3.7 CUSTOMER SERVICE UNIT**

For the Level 1 Customer Service described in this section, will the vendor

- Have access to ALECS to research receipt and disbursement information?
- Be required to document ALECS with information regarding calls?

**R22. Yes.**

**Q23. Page 36 - 3.3.7 CUSTOMER SERVICE UNIT**

Is it permissible for some telephony hardware, such as the VRU, to be located in another state?

**R23. Yes, as long as it is located within the continental United States.**

**Q24. Page 36 - 3.3.8 OPTIONAL EXPANDED CUSTOMER SERVICE UNIT**

The RFP instructs the vendor to describe an Expanded Customer Service Unit staffed by no more than 10 Full Time Positions. This limitation is imposed as a result of DHR's current budget constraints.

- Are the 10 FTEs in addition to the FTEs providing Level 1 Services?
- Please provide an estimate of the budget available for the Expanded CSU. This will help vendors determine the amount of funding available for equipment, hardware and software.

**R24. Yes, 10 FTEs in addition to those providing Level 1 Services.**

**The State is unable to provide a budget estimate at this time and wishes the vendors to submit budgets with their proposals.**

**Q25. Page 38 - 3.3.9.4 STATE ON-SITE REPRESENTATIVES**

Will the State onsite representatives be accessing State's network from their equipment? If yes, provide the details as to how this connectivity is expected to be established. Provide any other requirements; internet/email access, any special software, printers/fax etc that the onsite staff might need.

**R25. The State will provide secure T1 access to the site that where the vendor and "State onsite Representatives" are located. Access to a network printer (on the vendor's network) and physical access to fax and copy machines are required to be provided by the vendor. Also, each State Onsite Representative will require a telephone.**



**Q26. General Question**

Would DHR please consider a two-week extension of the due date for the proposal? We feel it is important that we thoroughly understand the response to all vendor questions in order to provide a more comprehensive and responsive proposal.

**R26. No.**

**Q27. Page 21 - 3.3.3.1 INITIALIZING THE ASDU DATABASE**

Will the offeror be required to convert any images or data from the current vendor's system?

**R27. Yes.**

**Q28. Page 31 - 3.3.4.6 UNIDENTIFIED OR UNPOSTABLE PAYMENTS**

If financial instrument is received with posting information but missing endorsement/signature does the vendor have authority to accept on behalf of the state?

**R28. The vendor may accept payments from businesses with missing endorsement/signature, but personal checks must be returned to the payer because checks cannot be presented to the district attorney without an endorsement/signature if they are non-sufficient funds.**

**Q29. Page 34 - 3.3.6.3 RECOVERY**

In light of the annual payment posting error reconciliation process, what dispute resolution process will be used to allot for an efficient ongoing research/resolution process?

**R29. The State has a mediation process available. See section 7.5.8. There is also an Alternative Dispute Resolution process available through the Alabama Attorney General's Office.**

**Q30. Page 36 - 3.3.7 CUSTOMER SERVICE UNIT**

Does the state have estimates of call volumes, talk times, and wait times? Can you please provide this information? What is the current staffing level? How many telephone lines does the current customer service unit provide?

**R30. See the last paragraph of this section, as it provides information regarding call volume and duration. Information regarding wait times is not available. Currently there are 10 telephone lines available at the SDU.**

**Q31. Page 36 - 3.3.7 CUSTOMER SERVICE UNIT**

What are the daily volumes (each) of letters, faxes, and emails currently handled by the Customer Service Unit?

**R31. We have no statistics on the daily volumes of the correspondences above. Monthly volumes were given in our response to Question 17.**

**Q32. Page 36 - 3.3.7 f. CUSTOMER SERVICE UNIT**

Does the State have volumes on the number of mis-posting requests monthly?

**R32. A monthly average would be 50 requests.**

**Q33. Page 36 - 3.3.8 OPTIONAL EXPANDED CUSTOMER SERVICE UNIT**

Is it the states intent to award the Optional Expanded Customer Service Unit separately from the SDU to two different vendors or will the same vendor be award both components?





- R33. If the State chooses to exercise the option of the expanded customer service unit it will be with the same vendor that is awarded the contract for the SDU.**
- Q34. Page 36 - 3.3.8 OPTIONAL EXPANDED CUSTOMER SERVICE UNIT**  
Although the RFP references no more than 10 FTE, will there be a mandatory seat requirement daily regardless of volume?
- R34. No.**
- Q35. Page 36 - 3.3.8 OPTIONAL EXPANDED CUSTOMER SERVICE UNIT**  
Is the 10 person limit for customer service only for the optional expanded unit staff or is it the total number of positions for level 1 and optional customer service combined?
- R35. See R24.**
- Q36. Page 37 - 3.3.8.1.1 CURRENT SYSTEM**  
Are 40 lines into the VRU sufficient to handle the call volume or do callers often receive a busy signal and/or complain that they are unable to access the VRU?
- R36. The VRU must be able to handle the volume of calls and must be able to serve 40 customers at any given time.**
- Q37. Page 43 - 3.4.6.1 TRAINING FOR ASDU STAFF**  
Will the State provide ALECS training to the Contractor?
- R37. Yes.**
- Q38. Page 48 - 3.5.2 a. PENALTIES**  
Will the state provide the frequency of penalties and amounts assessed to the current vendor over the last two years?
- R38. There have been no penalties in the last two years.**
- Q39. Page 73 - 7.7.1 RETENTION OF RECORDS**  
What is the retention period for original documents to be kept on site? What timeframe is permissible to rely solely on electronic version of documents for retention purposes?
- R39. Currently, original records are kept on site for one month then shredded at the vendor's expense. After that the electronic version of documents are used for reference.**
- Q40.** During the initial load of the ADSU database will the State of Alabama provide file extracts from the mainframe or will the vendor have access to pull the data directly?
- R40. The State will send its data and the vendor will provide access so that the State can place the data in the vendor's system.**
- Q41.** What database types and versions are currently on the database? i.e., VSAM, DB2, IMS, IDMS, ADABAS
- R41. Currently the data of ALECS is on DB2 V8 database and VSAM datasets. However, the Vendor will not have access to the State system and they do not need to pull the data.**
- Q42.** Will the vendor be required to validated the address information for employers and other states as CASS certified and Delivery Point Validated (DPV)



**R42. No.**

**Q43.** Is it anticipated that ALECS and SJIS will need to be updated from ADSU on a more frequent basis than daily?

**R43. No.**

**Q44.** Is it expected that ADSU will directly interface with ALECS and SJIS to update the data or is there an existing ingest system already in place that vendors are expected to utilize?

**R44. No. The ASDU sends the ALECS and SJIS payment files to the State Mainframe daily. ALECS and SJIS will receive the data from the State Mainframe.**

**Q45.** Does the State of Alabama expect the vendor to do identity matching between incoming payments and records currently in the ADSU database in order minimize duplicate records or erroneously posting of payments to the wrong account.

**R45. Yes.**

**Q46.** Does the state have a preferred hardware and operating system for the development of new systems?

**R46. No. Vendors have to choose the system that best fits to the requirements defined in the RFP.**

**R47.** Section 6.0 Evaluation Criteria on p. 59, Item **C** under Vendor Qualifying Information, shows 10 points associated with Subcontractors. Can you elaborate on how this section would be scored for vendors who elect not to use subcontractors vs. those who do? Will 10 points be available to vendors who elect not to use subcontractors?

**R47. Subcontractors will be given a score of 0-10 based on the qualifications listed in 4.2.5.1.3. No, if a Vendor does not propose a subcontractor the 10 point will be added to the Vendor Qualification and Direct Experience criterion and the total point for that section will change from 150 to 160 possible points.**

**Q48.** What is the Department of Human Resources' (DHR) basis and/or reasoning (e.g., business, operational, functional) for requiring the ASDU to be located within 30 miles of Montgomery, Alabama?

**R48. The facility must be physically available to personnel from DHR, Finance, and Information Systems Division. These are all based in Montgomery, Alabama.**

**Q49.** Will the Department of Human Resources consider waiving the site location requirement for the ASDU provided a vendor can adequately propose alternatives or solutions to address DHR's basis and/or reasoning for the current site location requirement and achieve all other requirements of the RFP?

**R49. No.**

**Q50.** Will DHR consider modifying the site location requirement such that only that portion of the ASDU that is the basis and/or reasoning for this requirement is located within 30 miles of Montgomery, AL, and the remainder of the ASDU is located elsewhere in Alabama? And, if so, what portion of the ASDU must be located within 30 miles of Montgomery, AL?

**R50. No.**





**Q51. RFP GENERAL QUESTIONS**

What is the current cost for encoding from the bank?

**R51. Currently, the bank does not charge to encode.**

**Q52. RFP SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**

**3.1.1 DHR Payment Processing, Page 20**

Please provide the total number of "payments," number of checks handled and the average number of pieces of paper per check. This will allow us to size the mail handling and scanning functions.

**R52. Our SDU receives an average of 3733 paper checks per month. The envelope, payment vehicle, and accompanying paper are all scanned. A single payment may have one accompanying paper or none. A large employer may send one check and dozens of accompanying papers. We do not track the number of accompanying papers received in a month's time, but estimate that each check has, including the envelope, an average of 2.5 pieces of accompanying paper.**

**Q53. 3.3.4.6, Unidentified or Unpostable Payments, #C-Accounting for unidentified payments, Page 32**

Can the Adjustment Request Form for receipts placed in an unidentified status in the vendor's system be an electronic report viewable by CSA by accessing the vendor's system rather than the vendor manually completing the form and emailing or faxing to CSA?

**R53. No. Child Support Accounting must have an adjustment request because they must be able to provide "hard copy" documentation to other entities.**

**Q54.** What adjustments are done based on the Adjustment Request Form for receipts in unidentified in the vendor's system?

**R54. Currently, unidentifieds reside on the state system. The vendor requests adjustments to remove the unidentified item(s) and transfer these funds to the proper case through the use of the adjustment request form.**

**Q55. 3.3.7, Customer Service Unit, #f., Page 36**

The RFP states 50 to 60 calls per day are received and the majority of the inquiries are received via emails, letters and faxes. Please advise how many emails, letters and faxes are received daily.

**R55. See R17.**

**Q56. 3.5.1, Performance Standards, #G, Page 47**

Will ASDU be notified of posting errors electronically or by paper? Will notice of errors be daily, weekly or otherwise?

**R56. Notifications are both electronic and paper and are sent as discovered.**

**Q57. 4.2, Proposal Format, Page 49**

Please clarify what the State means by "Do not use tabs with paper inserts." We use full-page, clearly indexed tabs on heavy stock. Do these meet the State's requirement?

**R57. Yes.**

**Q58. 4.2.4, Licenses/Certificates/Credentials, Page 50**

Please specify the types of licenses and certifications the State requests with this requirement.

**R58. There are no licensure/certification/credential requirements for this procurement.**



**Q59. 4.2.5.1.5, Past and Present Contractual Relationships with the Department, Page 52**

Does this relate to the branch of a company that is submitting a proposal or to the entire company?

**R59. The entire company.**

**Q60. Required Licensure/Certification/Credential**

There are no requirements in this section. Was this an omission or there are no requirements?

**R60. See R58.**

**Q61.** Will the State consider adding a bar code to the billing statement?

**R61. Yes.**

**Q62.** Sections 3.3.1 (g) and 3.3.3.2 indicate new court orders, changes in court orders and changes in IVD Court Order Status will be sent to the ASDU on a daily basis. Please confirm that there will be a daily exchange of information versus weekly as indicated on page 33.

**R62. See R5.**

**Q63.** In following the format requirements of the RFP, there is no reference to 3.3.5, 3.3.6, 3.3.9, 3.3.10, 3.3.11. Do we assume that a response is required for these sections?

**R63. Yes.**

**Q64.** Will the Department please provide the number of calls handled and average duration of calls during the single highest hour of calls made to the IVR?

**R64. The current VRU system receives approximately 400,000 calls per month. The Department does not track hourly call volume or duration of individual calls.**

**Q65.** Will the State or the vendor be responsible for cost of toll-free telephone lines associated with the VRU operation? Will the state consider treating this cost as a pass through charge if the vendor is responsible?

**R65. The state is responsible for the cost of the toll-free telephone line for the VRU.**